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State Board of Education

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Dear Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents and
Public School Academy Directors:

The Michigan Legislature has recognized that it is critical that all students master basic literacy and mathematics skills. The Legislature has also recognized that periodic assessment is necessary to monitor development of student skills in order to provide guidance if intervention is needed to help students to achieve success in literacy and mathematics.

In 2000, the Michigan Legislature required schools to assess students' progress in grades 1-5 and to provide a summer school opportunity. These requirements, in PA 230 of 2000 take the form of amendments to the Revised School Code, and are linked to new provisions of the State School Aid Act. Districts that fail to assess pupil progress may be subject to a state aid penalty. The Department has prepared guidance to assist school districts as they select appropriate assessments and make decisions about summer school placement for students with needs in literacy and mathematics. The guidance document is available on the Department's internet site at <http://ed.mde.state.mi.us/assessment>.

Please feel free to contact Paul Bielawski, Supervisor of School Restructuring and Accountability, at (517) 335-5784 or bielawp@state.mi.us if you have questions regarding this issue.

Sincerely,

Arthur E. Ellis

Grades 1-5 Assessment and Summer School

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The Michigan Legislature has taken action that places new requirements on schools regarding assessment in grades 1-5 and summer school. The new requirements in [PA 230, 2000](#) take the form of amendments to the [Revised School Code](#), and are linked to new provisions of the [State School Aid Act](#). The following questions and answers have been prepared to assist school districts to select appropriate assessments and to make good decisions about summer school placement.

A. Assessment Requirements

1. What are school districts required to do?

School districts must conduct annual assessments of students in grades 1-5 in literacy and mathematics. School districts must also provide the opportunity to attend summer school for students at the end of third grade who do not have basic literacy and/or mathematics skills.

2. What is the purpose of the assessment?

The primary purpose of the assessment is to make decisions about programs for students and to encourage the use of data to improve instruction. Assessment data should be used to make decisions about instructional programs for individual students and for grade level groups (cohorts) of students. Schools must use the assessment data to determine students that need additional assistance, including summer school.

3. Who must be assessed?

Schools must assess all students in grades 1 to 5 each year.

4. What content must be assessed?

School districts must assess each student enrolled in grades 1-5 in the areas of literacy and mathematics during each school year.

5. When are schools required to begin testing?

The testing requirement is in place for the 2000-01 school year. Districts are not locked in to the 2000-01 testing plan on a long-term basis. Districts may choose to develop a testing plan that evolves over time.

6. *Must the district use the same assessment in all district schools?*

This is a district-wide testing requirement. The assessments should not vary across a district at a grade level, unless alternate assessments are needed for individual students as noted in questions twenty-three and twenty-four below. Different assessments may be used at various grade levels, in the context of a coherent district assessment plan.

7. *What is the State Aid Penalty if the assessment is not administered?*

In order to receive funds appropriated under Section 22b of the State School Aid Act, districts are required to administer assessments for pupils in grades 1 through 5. School districts will report to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) regarding administration of the tests.

8. *Must the assessment be given at the end of the school year?*

The assessment may be given at any time during the school year. Districts will need to determine when they identify students needing summer school and when parents are notified. If the assessment is administered in the middle of the school year, schools should keep in mind that students should not be assessed on content that they have not yet had the opportunity to learn.

B. Guidance for Selecting Assessments

9. *What tests may be used?*

Districts may use an assessment that meets the criteria described in question 11.

10. *How will locally developed or adopted tests be approved?*

Districts will be responsible to determine whether an assessment meets the criteria. The Department of Education has identified criteria (in question 11) that can be used by local districts to determine whether their assessments meet the guidelines. Criteria can be accessed at <http://ed.mde.state.mi.us/assessment>.

11. *What criteria should schools consider in selecting assessments?*

It is very important to match what is tested to the content that is taught. Schools should use their core curriculum as a tool in selecting assessments. The following criteria are for use by school districts in selecting assessments to meet this requirement:

- **Alignment**

- Is the assessment aligned with the content standards and benchmarks of the [Michigan Curriculum Framework](http://cdp.mde.state.mi.us/mcf) (<http://cdp.mde.state.mi.us/mcf>)?

- Is the assessment aligned to the local core curriculum and to local grade-level benchmarks?

- Is the assessment testing what is being taught and how it is being taught?

- **Developmental Appropriateness**

Does the assessment meet the standards for developmental_appropriateness noted in question 12?

- **Content**

The following content should be assessed during grades 1-5:

Literacy

- independent reading level
- oral language
- reading comprehension
- writing

Mathematics

- number sense and operations
- geometry and measurement
- data graphing and probability
- pattern and algebraic ideas

- **Assessment of Authentic Achievement**

Has the assessment been reviewed in relation to the Assessment Standards from the [Michigan Curriculum Framework](http://cdp.mde.state.mi.us/mcf) (<http://cdp.mde.state.mi.us/mcf>)?

- **Psychometric Quality**

How reliable is the assessment? (*If a student were retested under similar conditions, but later or with another teacher, would the same results be observed?*)

How valid is the assessment for the purpose for which it is being used? (*Does it answer the questions it purports to answer, that is no falsely identified students, no one who is in need has been missed?*)

Does the assessment identify students who need intervention? (*validity*)

How well does the assessment meet the professional standards noted in question 12?

In choosing assessments, the district should look at how the assessments fit together and what analyses of the data are facilitated by the way that assessment data is reported. School districts may want to consider whether the assessments chosen allow comparison of student performance from grade to grade (fourth graders with fifth graders) and from cohort to cohort (the fourth graders from 2000-01 with the fourth graders in 1999-2000).

12. What standards should be consulted in selecting and using assessments?

The following standards should be consulted regarding selection of assessment tools, test administration, and the use of assessment data. The following references contain links to the documents or to ordering information:

Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing of the [American Educational Research Association \(AERA\)](http://www.aera.net/products/standards.htm) (<http://www.aera.net/products/standards.htm>), [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](http://www.apa.org/science/testing.html) (<http://www.apa.org/science/testing.html>), and [National Council on Measurement in Education \(NCME\)](http://www.ncme.org/news/newsdetail.ace?ID=12)(<http://www.ncme.org/news/newsdetail.ace?ID=12>).

Position Statement Concerning High-Stakes Testing in PreK-12 Education of the American Education Research Association (AERA) (<http://www.aera.net/about/policy/stakes.htm>).

Standards for Appropriate Assessment of Young Children of the Michigan State Board of Education. (Contact (517) 373-8483 to obtain a copy)

Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment in Programs Serving Children Ages 3 through 8

(http://www.naeyc.org/resources/position_statements/psdap98.pdf) of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The Use of Tests When Making High-Stakes Decisions for Students: A Resource Guide for Educators and Policymakers,

(<http://www.ed.gov/ocr/testing/index.html>) of the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

13. How should school districts use the assessments be used to increase the quality of district programs?

The data collected by the assessments should establish baselines for measuring improvement in a continuous improvement process. The following are examples of processes that schools can use:

- The data can be used in the [School Improvement Plan](#) and in the [Annual Reports](#) under PA 25 of 1990.
- If a school chooses to become a member of the [North Central Association](#) (<http://www.nca.umich.edu>), the school may use its assessment data to demonstrate school improvement that focuses on improving student performance.
- The [Baldrige in Education](#) (<http://www.quality.nist.gov/bcpg.pdf.htm#EDUCATION>) process, facilitated by the [Michigan Quality Council](#) (<http://www.michiganquality.org/education>), uses data in a systems perspective for understanding performance management and moving toward quality.
- [Value added assessment](#) (http://shearsonforschools.com/TVAAS_index.html) allows schools to measure how well they help each child make academic gains each year.

14. What provisions apply to use of the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile?

Many schools are using the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP) for assessment of early literacy. The statute specifically allows the use of MLPP to meet the assessment requirements in literacy.

If a school chooses to use the MLPP, only those parts of the MLPP appropriate for the student need to be administered. The Milestone Assessments are useful for the initial assessment of all students.

Information regarding training in the use of the MLPP is available from the [Regional Literacy Training Centers](#) (<http://cdp.mde.state.mi.us/mlpp>). The Centers coordinate training in the use of MLPP and assist schools with literacy initiatives.

15. Will an assessment resource be available in mathematics?

The Department of Education has initiated development of the Michigan Mathematics Progress Profile. This resource is expected to be available in the 2001-02 school year. Districts will need to rely on other assessments until this new resource becomes available.

16. Can the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests be used to satisfy some of the assessment requirements?

MEAP may be used to fulfill the assessment requirement in grade four if this fits within the district's assessment system. The testing and reporting schedule for MEAP may not lend itself to use for summer school placement decisions, as the results may not be available at the time needed. Schools using MEAP as to meet the assessment requirement should review how MEAP fits within the district's assessment system.

C. Making Summer School Decisions

17. Which students must be provided the opportunity to attend summer school?

School districts may provide the opportunity to attend summer school to students leaving grade three who have not attained basic literacy and/or mathematics skills. Section 147 (3) of Public Act 121 of 2001 repealed the portion of the Revised School Code that required that summer school be provided.

18. How should schools identify students who have not attained basic reading and/or mathematics skills?

Districts may set standards to identify students who have not attained basic literacy and/or mathematics skills. The district's standard may include measures in addition to assessment data (from question 1). Documented teacher observation and other data can be used in the process. The district's standards must be anchored to the district's curriculum and grade level benchmarks.

Districts may use the low category on the fourth grade MEAP test as a reference. Students scoring in the low category on the fourth grade MEAP are considered not to have basic literacy and/or mathematics skills.

19. How should assessment data (from question 1) be used for summer school decisions?

Assessment data should be a part of the process of making decisions, including summer school. Current professional standards recommend that high-stakes decisions not be made based on a single test score. Rather, summer school decisions should be made on the basis of cumulative evidence, including daily schoolwork, assessments, and teacher observations.

20. How should parents be included in the process?

Districts should set a schedule so that parents are made aware of summer school opportunities as early as possible. This will allow parents to plan for their children's participation in the summer school program.

21. Are students who have not attained basic literacy and/or mathematics skills required to attend summer school?

Districts are invited, but not required, to offer them summer school at the end of grades one, two three and four.

22. Must a school retain in grade students who have not attained basic literacy and/or mathematics skills who have not attended summer school?

Retention of a student in a grade is a local policy decision. There is nothing in the new legislation that requires a school district to retain a student who has not attended summer school or who does not have basic literacy and/or mathematics skills.

23. How does the summer school requirement apply to year-round schools?

Year-round schools may provide extended learning opportunities between sessions.

C. Special Populations

24. What is the role of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team for the Grades 1 – 5 testing?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the IEP Team to determine how a student is to be assessed for state-wide and district-wide assessments. The IEP Team determines how the student will participate in the district-wide assessment system, not if they will participate.

The Grades 1 – 5 testing is a district-wide assessment, therefore, the IEP Team must determine if the student will participate in the district-wide assessment, the district wide assessment with assessment accommodations, or an alternate assessment.

25. What is the role of the IEP team once a district has made the determination that a special education student should be offered the opportunity to attend summer school?

Placement of special education students into a summer school program is a decision that must be made by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team, if the student is in need of special education services and/or programs that extend beyond the normal school year. If special education programs and/or services are not needed beyond the normal school year, special education students may attend a summer school program without an IEP Team decision. However, the length of time a special education student attends the

summer school program offered to general education students may be shortened by the IEP Team.

When a special education student attends the summer school offered to general education students and the IEP Team determines that the student will need special education services, IDEA, Part B funds, state categorical funds and ISD millage, as well as local school district funds may be used to reimburse the cost of special education services.

Special transportation for special education students should be discussed and determined by the IEP Team. If special transportation is needed, funding from state categorical funds and ISD millage, as well as local school district funds may be used to cover the cost of transportation for the student.

26. Do the requirements apply to limited English proficient students?

Students with limited English proficiency are not exempt from the assessment requirement. Students should not be required to participate in an assessment in a language that they do not understand. The student's English language proficiency should be used to determine if district-wide, the district wide assessment with assessment accommodations, or an alternate assessment. Specialized assessments may be needed to determine English proficiency and to measure academic skills in languages other than English.

Districts must provide the opportunity for students with limited English proficiency to attend summer school if the student meets the district's standard. Programs for students with limited English proficiency should be designed to meet their needs.

E. Funding

27. How will the cost of additional testing be handled?

The cost of additional testing is built into the Section 22b Discretionary Payment. These Section 22b payments are not to be considered per pupil revenue for school operating purposes.

28. May districts charge fees for summer school?

Schools may charge for summer school. Districts may use funding under Section 31a of the State School Aid Act to support the summer school program.

29. May districts charge fees for transportation for summer school? Must transportation be provided?

There is no specific requirement to provide transportation. Districts may use At-Risk funds to cover transportation costs.

30. *Are there recommendations for the length of the summer school or for the length of the summer school day?*

The summer school should be at least 6 weeks in duration. Evaluation of summer programs in 1999 and 2000 indicates that program effectiveness is minimized if less than 60 prime instructional hours are provided.

31. *Must two summer schools be provided for students who have not attained basic skills in both literacy and mathematics?*

The student should be placed in the program that best addresses the student's needs.

32. *How may the new state funds for summer school be used?*

These funds are no longer available.

F. Accreditation Implications

33. *How does the testing requirement relate to state accreditation reporting requirements?*

Schools in districts that do not report compliance with the grades 1-5 assessment requirement will not receive state accreditation. The reporting requirement for grades 1-5 testing will be at the district level.

34. *How should assessment results be reported to the public?*

As part of the requirements for state accreditation, Section 380.1204a of the Revised School Code requires [Annual Educational Reports](#) for each school district and school building. Section 1204a (1)(d) requires that the Annual Educational Report contain:

"A report for each school of aggregate student achievement based upon the results of any locally-administered student competency tests, statewide assessment tests, or nationally normed achievement tests that were given to pupils attending school in the school district."

A summary of the results of the assessments required by Section 1280(b)(1) should be included in the Annual Educational Reports for the school building and the school district.

Test Criteria Checklist

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A. Alignment

1. Is the assessment aligned to the local core curriculum and to local grade level benchmarks?
2. Is the assessment measuring what is being taught and how it is being taught?
3. Is the assessment aligned with the content standards and benchmarks of the Michigan Curriculum Framework?

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B. Developmental Appropriateness

1. Does the assessment meet the Standards for Appropriate Assessment of Young Children of the Michigan State Board of Education or the Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment in Programs Serving Children Ages 3 through 8 of the National Association for the Education of Young Children?

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C. Content

The following content should be assessed during grades 1-5:

1. Literacy
 - a) independent reading level
 - b) reading comprehension
 - c) oral language
 - d) writing
2. Mathematics
 - a) number sense and operations
 - b) data graphing and probability
 - c) geometry and measurement
 - d) pattern and algebraic ideas

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D. Psychometric Quality

1. How reliable is the assessment?
(If a student were retested under similar conditions, but later or with another teacher, would the same results be observed?)
2. How valid is the assessment for the purpose for which it is being used?
(Does it answer the questions it purports to answer, that is no falsely identified students, no one who is in need has been missed?)
3. Does the assessment identify students who need intervention? (validity)
4. Does the assessment meet professional standards?

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E. Assessment of Authentic Achievement

1. Has the assessment been reviewed in relation to the Assessment Standards from the Michigan Curriculum Framework?

Grades 1-5 Assessment and Accreditation

Revised School Code

Sec. 1280b.

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), the board of a school district, or board of directors of a public school academy that operates any of grades 1 to 5, shall administer each school year to all pupils in grades 1 to 5 a nationally-recognized norm-referenced test or another assessment, which may include a locally-adopted assessment, approved by the superintendent of public instruction at the request of the school district or public school academy.
- (2) A school district or public school academy may use the Michigan literacy progress profile to assess literacy in grades 1 to 3 as part of its compliance with subsection (1).
- (3) If a school is designated for participation in the national assessment of education progress program, the school shall participate as designated.
- (4) An elementary school that is not in compliance with subsection (1) or a school that does not comply with subsection (3) shall not be accredited under section 1280.

Michigan Department of Education

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